

What is claimed is:

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1. A method to update a software module, comprising:
 - identifying a first version of the software module;
 - identifying a second version of the software module;
 - determining which of the first version and the second version of the software module is most current; and
 - indicating that version of the software module determined to be most current.
 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising obtaining that version of the software module determined to be the most current version.
 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising loading the obtained version of the software module.
 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of identifying a first version of the software module comprises communicating with a physical device associated with the software module.
 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the act of communicating comprises determining an identifier value of the physical device.
 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising determining a subsystem identifier value of the physical device.

1 7. The method of claim 4, wherein the act of communicating comprises
2 determining a basic input-output system version identifier value of the physical
3 device.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of identifying a second version of
2 the software module comprises communicating with an update information
3 source.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the act of communicating further
2 comprises:
3 identifying the software module to the update information source;
4 receiving, from the update information source, an indication of the second
5 version of the software module.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the act of communicating comprises
2 communicating by a modem.

1 11. The method of claim 8, wherein the act of communicating comprises
2 communicating by a computer network.

1 12. The method of claim 8, wherein the act of communicating comprises
2 communicating with a database server device.

1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of determining comprises
2 comparing at least one characteristic of the first identified first version of the
3 software module with the same characteristic of the second identified first
4 version of the software module.

1 14. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of indicating comprises visually
2 displaying an indication of the software module determined to be the most
3 current version to a user.

1 15. The method of claim 2, wherein the act of obtaining comprises retrieving
2 that version of the software module determined to be the most current version
3 from an update source.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the act of retrieving comprises retrieving
2 from an update source that is physically distinct from the location of the first
3 identified version of the software module.

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17. A program storage device, readable by a programmable control device,
comprising:
instructions stored on the program storage device for causing the
programmable control device to
identify a first version of a software module;
identify a second version of the software module;
determine which of the first version and the second version of the
software module is most current; and
indicate that version of the software module determined to be most
current.

18. The program storage device of claim 17, further comprising instructions to
obtain that version of the software module determined to be most current
version.

19. The program storage device of claim 18, further comprising instructions to
load the obtained version of the software module.

20. The program storage device of claim 17, wherein the instructions to
identify a first version of the software module comprise instructions to
communicate with a physical device associated with the software module.

21. The program storage device of claim 20, wherein the instructions to
communicate comprise instructions to determine an identifier value of the
physical device.

1 22. The program storage device of claim 21, further comprising instructions to
2 determine a subsystem identifier value of the physical device.

1 23. The program storage device of claim 20, wherein the instructions to
2 communicate comprise instructions to determine a basic input-output system
3 version identifier value of the physical device.

1 24. The program storage device of claim 17, wherein the instructions to
2 identify a second version of the software module comprise instructions to
3 communicate with an update information source.

1 25. The program storage device of claim 24, wherein the instructions to
2 communicate further comprise instructions to:
3 identify the software module to the update information source;
4 receive, from the update information source, an indication of the second
5 version of the software module.

1 26. The program storage device of claim 24, wherein the instructions to
2 communicate comprise instructions to communicate by a modem.

1 27. The program storage device of claim 24, wherein the instructions to
2 communicate comprise instructions to communicate by a computer network.

1 28. The program storage device of claim 24, wherein the instructions to
2 communicate comprise instructions to communicate with a database server
3 device.

1 29. The program storage device of claim 17, wherein the instructions to
2 determine comprise instructions to compare at least one characteristic of the first
3 identified first version of the software module with the same characteristic of the
4 second identified first version of the software module.

1 30. The program storage device of claim 17, wherein the instructions to
2 indicate comprise instructions to visually display an indication of the software
3 module determined to be the most current version to a user.

1 31. The program storage device of claim 18, wherein the instructions to
2 obtain comprise instructions to retrieve that version of the software module
3 determined to be the most current version from an update source.

1 32. The program storage device of claim 31, wherein the instructions to
2 retrieve comprise instructions to retrieve from an update source that is physically
3 distinct from the location of the first identified version of the software module.

1 33. A computer executed method to update a software module, comprising:
2 identifying a software module;
3 automatically obtaining version information of the software module from a
4 local source;
5 automatically obtaining version information of the software module from a
6 non-local source;
7 comparing the version information from the local source with the version
8 information from the non-local source; and
9 automatically retrieving an update module for the software module if the
10 version information from the non-local source is newer than the version
11 information from the local source.

1 34. The method of claim 33, wherein the act of retrieving further comprises
2 updating the software module with the retrieved update module.

1 35. The method of claim 33, further comprising automatically updating the
2 software module with a local update module obtained from a local media source
3 if the version information from the local source is newer than the version
4 information from the non-local source

1 36. The method of claim 33, wherein the act of obtaining version information
2 from a local source comprises, obtaining version information from a registry file.

1 37. The method of claim 33, wherein the act of obtaining version information
2 from a local source comprises, obtaining version information from a local floppy
3 disk.

1 38. The method of claim 33, wherein the act of obtaining version information
2 from a non-local source comprises, obtaining version information from a website.

1 38. The method of claim 33, wherein the act of obtaining version information
2 from a non-local source comprises, obtaining version information from a world
3 wide web site.

1 40. The method of claim 33, wherein the act of obtaining version information
2 from a non-local source comprises, obtaining version information from dial-in
3 server.

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